



What are the barriers to good communication?

Effective communication is vital to maintaining good relationships, both at work and in your personal life.

Communication can be ineffective for a range of reasons, and can lead to issues ranging from simple misunderstandings to full-blown arguments.

Some of the more common barriers to good communication include:

BEING UNFOCUSED

When talking to someone, it's important to stay focused on what they're saying. Try not to let your mind wander, think about how you're going to reply or check your phone, as you might misinterpret – or miss – the message.

BEING STRESSED OR EMOTIONAL

When you're stressed or overly emotional, you're more likely to respond hastily, in a way you may regret later, as well as misinterpret what others are saying. When you start feeling stressed, try to pause or stall the conversation so you can calm down, take some deep breaths and think about what you want to say. Speak clearly and try to stay relaxed. If necessary, postpone the conversation so everyone has some time to unwind.



NEGATIVE OR INCONSISTENT BODY LANGUAGE

Your body language says a lot about how you're feeling, and if you're saying one thing but communicating something else with your actions, it can confuse the message. For example, don't say you're excited about a project while fidgeting, looking around the room or checking your phone – as this suggests the opposite.

Likewise, try not to use negative body language – such as avoiding eye contact, crossing your arms or rolling your eyes – even if you don't like what the other person is saying. This will likely only make them defensive.

PREJUDICE OR ASSUMPTIONS

If, due to prejudice or stereotyping, you go into a conversation with someone with preconceived ideas about what their agenda is or what they're going to say, you may miss their point entirely or not get yours across effectively. Even if you think you're going to disagree with someone on a point you're about to discuss, or you think you know what they're going to say, given them the time to talk, really listen to what they're saying and try to see the situation from their perspective.

CULTURAL OR LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

The social norms and etiquette of communication vary greatly between different cultures – a point you should be aware of when communicating with international business associates or friends from overseas. For example, while bringing gifts to a meeting or showing emotion in a business environment is encouraged in some cultures, it can be insulting in others.

Similarly, if there are language barriers between you and the person you're talking with, miscommunication is likely. And even when people speak the same language, jargon and overly technical language can confuse a conversation if one person is not familiar with the terms being used, so try to ensure your language is appropriate to the context and avoid jargon.

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Corporate Mental Health Alliance AUSTRALIA

The Corporate Mental Health Alliance (CMHAA) is a group of Australian businesses dedicated to providing mentally healthy workplaces for their people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

Website: cmhaa.org.au

LinkedIn: [Corporate Mental Health Alliance Australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/corporate-mental-health-alliance-australia)



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